

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page , line , as follows:

Page 1, line 1, before TECHNICAL FIELD, please insert as follows:

This application claims priority to EP Application No. 00850028.2 filed February 15, 2000, the entire contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 4, as follows:

~~BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION AND PRIOR ART~~

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 8, as follows:

~~DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS~~